

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 3, 5-12, 15-17, 20-24, and 26 are now in the application. Claims 3, 16, and 26 have been amended in an effort to even more clearly define the present invention and to facilitate prosecution of the instant application. The support for the amendment may be found, for example, on page 19, lines 9-10 of the specification. Claims 1-2, 4, 13-14, 18-19, and 25 have been cancelled to facilitate prosecution of the instant application.

Under the heading “Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 112” of the above-identified Office Action, claims 13 and 25 have been rejected as failing to comply with the written description requirement under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

Although Applicants disagree, claims 13 and 25 have been cancelled to facilitate prosecution of the instant application.

Under the heading “Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102” of the above-identified Office Action, claims 3, 6-9, 12, 15-17, 21-24, and 26 have been rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Publication No. 2001/0006028 to Sasaki et al. (hereinafter “Sasaki”) under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a); and claims 3, 5, 15-17, 20-22, and 26 have been rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,796,237 to Schuster et al. (hereinafter “Schuster”) under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

Under the heading "Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103" of the above-identified Office Action, claims 5 and 20 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Sasaki in view of Schuster under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a); claims 10 and 11 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Schuster under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a); and claims 10 and 11 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Sasaki under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Applicants respectfully traverse.

Sasaki discloses a printing plate which can be recovered by washing the plate with water (cleaning step). Therefore, in Sasaki the recovery does not comprise a clearing step based on the use of a liquid clearing medium but only the long known washing step using water. Accordingly, Sasaki does not disclose initially washing ink from the printing form; and after washing the printing form, treating the printing form with a liquid clearing medium in a non-abrasive manner, irreversibly clearing all image information on a surface of the printing form, as in the present invention.

Schuster discloses a printing form having conductive or dielectric material on which charged toner particles are applied and then cross-linked by laser light. The laser imaging also makes the cross-linked particles adhere to the plate surface. Thus, the image is stored only in the cross-linked particles and not in the plate material. After printing, the plate is restored by removing (cleaning)

the particles, e.g. with a solvent. Cleaning away the particles also removed the image and therefore no separate clearing of the plate after washing is necessary. Accordingly, Schuster also does not disclose a two-step process, namely initially washing ink from the printing form; and after washing the printing form, treating the printing form with a liquid clearing medium in a non-abrasive manner, irreversibly clearing all image information on a surface of the printing form, as in the present invention.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of independent claims 3, 16-17, and 26. Independent claims 3, 16-17, and 26 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art. The dependent claims are believed to be patentable as well because they all are ultimately dependent on claims 3 or 16.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 3, 5-12, 15-17, 20-24, and 26 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate receiving a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

It is noted that more than five amendments and two notices of appeals have been filed in this application and the examiner still cites similar documents

showing cleaning but no separate liquid medium clearing step. Applicants believe that this kind of "piecemeal examination" is improper. **Applicants, therefore, request that the Examiner contacts the undersigned counsel for an interview before issuing any further Office Action in this case.**

Please charge any other fees that might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner Greenberg Stemer LLP, No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,

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